

***The Rhode Island Department of Mental Health,
Retardation and Hospitals***

***Development Disabilities System Reform
Introductory Summit II***

“RFI Summary”

By Ellen Nelson, PhD

Friday, November 30, 2007

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Rhode Island Shriners Center (*Imperial Room*)

Request for Information

Introduction

The Rhode Island Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals (MHRH) is seeking ideas and information from interested parties to assist in improving the statewide system of services and supports for citizens with developmental disabilities including: individuals and family members served by the Department; advocates; community members, providers; and sister state agencies.

MHRH is interested in addressing needs identified in its Quality Assessment Process conducted in 2006 and 2007, responding to citizens with developmental disabilities with more diversity of options and aligning resources with identified needs. Initial priority areas for improvement include:

- 1. Self Determination**
- 2. Life Choices Broker**
- 3. Housing Options, a Trust and Vouchers**
- 4. Employment**
- 5. Pay For Performance System for Providers**

The philosophy that will guide us as we improve the system is ***Community Inclusion***. The essence of ***Community Inclusion*** is described below:

“Our goal should be clear. We are seeking nothing less than a life surrounded by the richness and diversity of community. A collective life. A common life. An Everyday Life. A powerful life that gains its joy from the creativity and connectedness that comes when we join in association as citizens to create an inclusive world.”

-John McKnight

- Interested Parties are encouraged to respond to this “**Request for Ideas**” (RFI) by:
- **Written Comment**-providing written ideas and proposals responding to the questions related to the System Improvement Areas described below, and/or
- **Participation** – input will be further sought through a series of **Mini-Summit Sessions** and **Facilitated Meetings**. These sessions and meetings are designed to gather additional input on the System Improvement Areas. Note: See timeline and instructions at the end of this document
- The period for gathering stakeholder input will start on November 16, 2007 and end on February 15, 2008.
- All input will inform a RFP/RFP(s) to be issued in March 2008.
- Participation is voluntary and encouraged.

Systems Improvement Area 1: Self-Determination

- Self Determination is a philosophy that asserts that people have a right to live where they want to live, stay connected to families and communities of origin, and choose what they want to do, with whom, when, and how they want to do it. Self determination encourages an individualized lifelong planning approach with an emphasis on independence, self-direction, informed choice, and consistent opportunities for reassessment, new choices, and change.

Request for Ideas

- What innovations and changes would you suggest to the current system to actively support and encourage self-determination, maximize natural supports and consumer/ family driven life decision making?

Systems Improvement Area 2: Life Choices Broker

- A Life Choices Broker is a personal advisor (objective and non-biased), similar to a financial advisor or a legal advisor, who has the knowledge and expertise necessary to assist a citizen with developmental disabilities to make informed life choices and provide consistent opportunity for reassessment, new choices and change. A Life Choices Broker would need to be specially trained and certified by the State of Rhode Island as a qualified Life Choices Broker. A Life Choices Broker would advise a citizen with developmental disabilities as to their available options for housing, employment, supports to daily living, personal supports, and community involvement and to act as a liaison to the individual's fiscal intermediary, as necessary. A Life Choices Broker must be impartial and not have a conflicting role in relationship to the citizen with developmental disabilities s/he is advising.

Request for Ideas

- How can we best create capacity to ensure that citizens make informed choices?
- What should be the specific functions of the Life Choices Broker?
- How can we best assist citizens with developmental disabilities in getting the best match in terms of services and supports?
- What are alternative models that will achieve the same outcomes?
- How should the assessment and support coordination functions be provided?

Systems Improvement Area 3: Housing Options, a Trust and Vouchers

- Housing and related costs are not covered currently under the federal Medicaid program. SSI stipends are insufficient to pay for the full cost of housing in the Rhode Island marketplace. Group homes owned by the state are now aging, and the state has insufficient funds to maintain the homes. Most of the 24-hour residential supports the state provides rely on full-time paid staff hired by and responsible to someone other than the person with the disability. Increasingly, citizens with developmental disabilities, especially younger and/or more independent citizens, seek and value supports that allow them to hire their own support staff, and live more independently, with family, or with friends, as long as they are able.

Request for Ideas

- How can the state increase the affordability, accessibility and availability of new housing models?
- How can the state inform citizens with developmental disabilities of their housing options (group homes, shared living arrangement, supported apartments, specialized medical facilities, etc.)?
- How can the state assure adequate capacity for each housing option?
- How can MHRH assure citizens with developmental disabilities live with their families as long as possible or in an independent setting?
- What can be done to more adequately support families?

Examples of Housing Options:

- **Living with Your Family and Family Supports:**
- Rhode Island currently provides respite, personal care services, and homemaker services to support families.
- **Request for Ideas**
- Are these the right supports?
- What other supports are needed?
- What can be done differently to encourage and support individuals who would like to continue to live with their family?

Supported Living Arrangements:

- Supported living arrangements are when a family or individual welcomes an individual with developmental disabilities into their home. Or, in reverse, if a citizen with a disability welcomes an individual or a family to live with them in their apartment or home. Rhode Island has relatively few (less than 100) individuals in supported living arrangements.
- **Request for Ideas**
- How can Rhode Island assure that every individual currently understands the full range of supportive living options?
- How do individuals remain aware of their ability to choose more supportive living opportunities now or in the future?

Living independently or with friends:

- Many citizens with developmental disabilities are choosing to live on their own or with a special friend, partner or roommate(s).
- **Request for Ideas**
- How can Rhode Island better support persons in independent living situations?
- What do citizens with developmental disabilities need in order to live as independently as possible?

Housing Vouchers through a Housing Trust

- A housing trust is a pool of money set aside and dedicated to a legally specified need or purpose. MHRH is working on the development of a housing trust dedicated to Rhode Island citizens with developmental disabilities. This trust will provide a permanent, sustainable funding source to help citizens with developmental disabilities to retain their ability to afford housing into the future.
- Lack of affordable housing often results in individuals relying on the state not just for services and supports, but for a place to live. The SSI stipend is insufficient for this purpose. The State of Rhode Island is interested in transferring its traditional role as landlord to providers or other entities interested in purchasing the real estate to be run as group homes or to be converted into other types of sustainable housing or necessary services. Proceeds from the sale of these MHRH properties would be put into a restricted trust fund. The interest generated from this fund would provide vouchers to supplement SSI stipends by putting vouchers into the hands of citizens with developmental disabilities to be spent on housing in the community. The principal would be left to grow in perpetuity.

Request for Ideas

- What are the key questions or concerns stakeholders have about the housing trust?
- Who should be eligible?
- Are providers interested in purchasing group homes?
What would they need?
- Are consumers interested in purchasing group homes?
What would they need?
- What is the best approach to shifting the state out of the landlord role?

Systems Improvement Area 4: Employment

- Employment is an empowering life opportunity. People with disabilities have the highest unemployment rate of any other minority group in the country and in our state. Most individuals with developmental disabilities have the ability but not the opportunity to have meaningful employment within the community. The Rhode Island community in many instances needs to be informed, challenged and engaged in offering employment to citizens with developmental disabilities. Currently there are insufficient opportunities in Rhode Island for both supported (place, train and support) or independent (train and place) employment in community workplaces. The percentage of citizens with developmental disabilities working in Rhode Island approximates 15%. In other parts of the country over 60% of the citizens with developmental disabilities are working. If we strive for inclusion and equitable life choices for persons with developmental disabilities, employment must be a renewed priority in Rhode Island.

- **Request for Ideas**
- How can we create, cultivate and promote positive opportunities for employment in community settings?
- What are appropriate expectations of persons with developmental disabilities to work and/or otherwise contribute to the community?
- How do we identify jobs and support employers, as they employ citizens with developmental disabilities?

Systems Improvement Area 5: Pay for Performance System for Providers

- “Pay for performance” is the concept of providing enhanced payment to providers who contract to work toward and accomplish the goals that the state will set out for an innovative service system. For example, the state is considering paying providers incentives to actively work to identify and offer appropriate SLA placements to individuals currently in group homes.
- Pay for Performance contracts with providers would:
- Require submission of timely and accurate data
- Assure access, quality, and safety of services and supports
- Provide incentives to promote and encourage innovation and change to meet the needs and choice of individuals
- Provide financial incentives to reward successful client outcomes
- Specify quality of life measures or successful client outcome measures with clear accountability
- Develop and report performance measures that would regularly be made available to citizens with developmental disabilities and their families, Life Choices Brokers and advocates.
- Maximize investment of resources into direct services and supports.

Request for Ideas

- What administrative reforms are necessary to assure the statewide system of services and supports is simply understood, easy to access, coordinated, running efficiently, keeping overhead down, keeping quality up, and is consumer satisfaction focused and friendly?
- How can the service and support system be more consumer- driven and accountable?
- How can support and financing models be designed to be progressive, affordable and sustainable?

-

Timeline for Process

- On November 16, 2007, the Department is holding the first Summit meeting, the first in a series of meetings. Dr. Ellen Nelson, Director of MHRH, will provide an overview of the Developmental Disabilities System Reform, the intent of the RFI, the plans for the Summit Series and a review of the timeline for providing and analyzing input and developing recommendations to the Department concerning the four Systems Improvement Areas. These recommendations will be finalized by February 15, 2008 and will be used to prepare one or more Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to provide services and supports for citizens with developmental disabilities in Rhode Island. The RFP(s) will be issued in March 2008 and will result in new service contracts which will begin on July 1, 2008.

Send written responses to this Request for Ideas by February 15, 2008 to:

- **By Mail: DDD System Reform RFI Response Barry Hall- Rm 118 14 Harrington Rd. Cranston RI 02920**
- **By Email: DDRFI@mhrh.ri.gov**
- **Call with questions: (401) 462-6024**
- **Comments & suggestions will be taken starting now until February 15, 2008.**
- **To encourage interaction among all interested parties and MHRH staff a Series of Mini-Summit Sessions to Discuss Systems Improvement Areas will be conducted from now until February 15, 2008. If you wish to volunteer for one of the Program Committees for these sessions, please let us know by December 3, 2007.**
- **If you wish to request a special meeting concerning the RFI assist with logistics and scheduling these meetings please Email or call Susan Babin at SBabin@mhrh.ri.org (401) 462-6026 or Melinda Thomas at: Mthomas@mhrh.ri.gov (401) 462-0855**

Mini-Summit Sessions

Program Planning Process

- » **Program Committees**

- » **Structure**

- » **Charge**

- » **Time Line**

- » **Process**

Mini-Summit Sessions

Program Planning Process

Program Committees

- 1. Self Determination & Life Choices Broker**
- 2. Housing Options & Housing Trust**
- 3. Employment**
- 4. Pay- for –Performance for Providers**

Mini-Summit Sessions

Program Planning Process

Structure

- » **Co-Chairs – MHRH Staff and Community Stakeholder**
- » **Representative Membership**
- » **12 members**

Mini-Summit Sessions Program Planning Process

Charge

Plan Sessions to provide information and generate ideas to facilitate people submitting ideas on Feb 15.

Mini-Summit Sessions

Program Planning Process

Time Line

- » December 2007: Committees meet to plan Sessions
- » January 2008: All Sessions Held
- » Post Session Proceeding on the Web
- » February 15, 2008 Ideas due.

1. Self Determination & Life Choices Broker

Request for Ideas

- What innovations and changes would you suggest to the current system to actively support and encourage self-determination, maximize natural supports and consumer/ family driven life decision making?
- advising.

Request for Ideas

- How can we best create capacity to ensure that citizens make informed choices?
- What should be the specific functions of the Life Choices Broker?
- How can we best assist citizens with developmental disabilities in getting the best match in terms of services and supports?
- What are alternative models that will achieve the same outcomes?
- How should the assessment and support coordination functions be provided?

2. Housing Options & Housing Trust

Request for Ideas

- How can the state increase the affordability, accessibility and availability of new housing models?
- How can the state inform citizens with developmental disabilities of their housing options (group homes, shared living arrangement, supported apartments, specialized medical facilities, etc.)?
- How can the state assure adequate capacity for each housing option?
- How can MHRH assure citizens with developmental disabilities live with their families as long as possible or in an independent setting?
- What can be done to more adequately support families?

Request for Ideas-Family Supports

- Are these the right supports?
- What other supports are needed?
- What can be done differently to encourage and support individuals who would like to continue to live with their family?

Request for Ideas-SLA

- How can Rhode Island assure that every individual currently understands the full range of supportive living options?
- How do individuals remain aware of their ability to choose more supportive living opportunities now or in the future?

Request for Ideas-independent living

- How can Rhode Island better support persons in independent living situations?
- What do citizens with developmental disabilities need in order to live as independently as possible?

• Continued

2. Housing Options & Housing Trust(cont)

Request for Ideas-independent living

- How can Rhode Island better support persons in independent living situations?
- What do citizens with developmental disabilities need in order to live as independently as possible?

Request for Ideas

- What are the key questions or concerns stakeholders have about the housing trust?
- Who should be eligible?
- Are providers interested in purchasing group homes? What would they need?
- Are consumers interested in purchasing group homes? What would they need?
- What is the best approach to shifting the state out of the landlord role?

3. Employment

- **Request for Ideas**
- How can we create, cultivate and promote positive opportunities for employment in community settings?
- What are appropriate expectations of persons with developmental disabilities to work and/or otherwise contribute to the community?
- How do we identify jobs and support employers, as they employ citizens with developmental disabilities?

4. Pay- for –Performance for Providers

Request for Ideas

- What administrative reforms are necessary to assure the statewide system of services and supports is simply understood, easy to access, coordinated, running efficiently, keeping overhead down, keeping quality up, and is consumer satisfaction focused and friendly?
- How can the service and support system be more consumer- driven and accountable?
- How can support and financing models be designed to be progressive, affordable and sustainable?